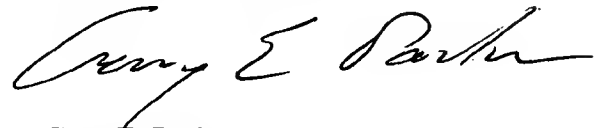


provided no explanation of why prosecution has now been reopened, nor has the Office pointed out any deficiencies in the previously submitted declarations. In view of those declarations, the pending §102(e) rejection cannot be supported by the '023 patent. The '559 patent issued from a divisional application of application Serial No. 08/609,572, which application issued as the '023 patent. Since Applicants eliminated the '023 patent as §102(e) prior art against claims 1, 3-13, and 15-32, the '559 patent cannot support a §102(e) rejection of the same claims.

On the basis of the above remarks, Applicants believe that each rejection has been addressed and overcome. Applicants respectfully request the Office to withdraw the rejection of the claims under §102(e). If for any reason the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of the application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (206) 442-6673.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Enclosures:

Amendment Fee Transmittal (in duplicate)
Postcard

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